

REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 12, 14-23 and 26 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 6, 12, 19 and 26 are amended.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to Applicants' representatives at the November 9, 2005 personal interview. Applicants' record of that interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9, 12, 14-23 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Aihara (U.S. Patent 6,491,447). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Aihara fails to disclose an optical module that attaches to an optical plug that is part of an optical transmission path, as recited in independent claim 1. Aihara also fails to disclose an optical module having an optical socket which is adapted to guide signal light to or from a second lens formed in an optical plug, as recited in independent claim 6. Aihara also fails to disclose a manufacturing method of an optical module involving the mounting of an optical socket that is adapted to guide a signal light to or from a lens formed in an optical plug, as recited in independent claim 19.

I. Independent Claim 1

With regard to claim 1, Aihara fails to disclose all of the features recited in claim 1 because Aihara's connector 61 is not actually part of an optical transmission path. Aihara's connector 61 is not part of an optical transmission path because connector 61 merely encloses optical fiber 15 via through hole 64, and connector 61 itself does not constitute part of the optical transmission path.

At the personal interview, an argument was asserted that connector 61 could be viewed to be part of an optical transmission path if the end of optical fiber 15 was considered to be part of the Aihara "optical plug." However, such a combination obscures the distinction between Aihara's connector 61 and optical fiber 15 by combining the two into a single plug

structure at some undefined point. Furthermore, connector 61 cannot be viewed as being combined with optical fiber 15 to form an optical plug because that would place the end of optical fiber 15 at some point before the Aihara "optical plug" well away from positioning surface 33. Such a construction would prevent positioning surface 33 from acting as a positioning surface for optical fiber 15, and be contrary to where Aihara discloses that the "end face of the optical fiber 15 is abutted against the positioning surface 33." See Aihara at col. 6, lines 27-26 (emphasis added).

In addition, Aihara at col. 7, line 57 to col. 8, line 40, generally characterizes connector 61 as only a clip through which optical fiber 15 is inserted and fixed therein. See Aihara at col. 7, lines 61-64. By that disclosure, it is clear in Aihara that connector 61 is not part of the optical transmission path since optical fiber 15 merely passes through connector 61 without connector 61 constituting part of the optical transmission path.

II. Independent Claim 6

With regard to independent claim 6, Aihara fails to disclose an optical module having an optical socket that is adapted to guide signal light to or from a second lens formed in an optical plug. Aihara fails to disclose all of the features of independent claim 6 because the "optical plug" of Aihara is merely an optical fiber 15 abutting against surface 33, and there is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion of a lens formed in Aihara's "optical plug." At the personal interview, the Examiner agreed that Aihara does not disclose a second lens formed in Aihara's "optical plug." Accordingly, Aihara does not disclose an optical module with an optical socket adapted to guide signal light to or from a second lens formed in an optical plug.

III. Independent Claim 19

With regard to independent claim 19, Aihara fails to disclose a manufacturing method involving an optical socket that is adapted to guide a signal light to or from a lens formed in

an optical plug. Although not discussed at the interview, the Examiner agreed that a similar feature recited in independent claim 6 (discussed above) is not disclosed in Aihara.

IV. Other Amendments

In addition to the aforementioned amendments, claims 1, 6, 12, 19 and 26 are amended for clarity by deleting the term "surface." As discussed at the interview, these amendments are acceptable to the Examiner.

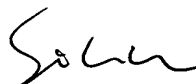
V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Aihara fails to disclose all of the features recited in independent claims 1, 6 and 19, as well as the additional features recited in the dependent claims thereof. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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